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own time to be gained from reading the story of a man who ceases to be able to believe in Christianity after reading Darwin, and who then comes to the conclusion that the only truth to be found lies in natural science?

The author's own position is not made very clear. His moral teaching is unexceptionable, if not very original. For the rest he seems inclined to a vague, benevolent agnosticism about religious matters, tolerant of everything except clear thinking and definite beliefs, which come in for the familiar abuse as "hard and fast dogmas." Such a state of mind is revealed, for instance, in the extraordinary statement that "if we worship in Spirit and in Truth, we shall care far more for truth than for dogma," as if we could care for a 'dogma' which we did not believe to be the truth. He loves vagueness and mystery, and his religious emotion center round, "'The Eternal, not ourselves,' 'The Unknowable,' 'The Absolute,' 'The Moral Law,' 'Spirit,' 'God,'—all being mere names for the ever-varying manifestations of the wondrous Power which lies hidden, in its reality, from our vision." It is a familiar attitude. But we could wish that its numerous advocates displayed a little more realization that it is far more obscurantist, far more a negation of the claims of the intellect and the reason, than any of the 'dogmas' which they so strongly denounce.

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#### THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AND THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD.

By J. G. Frazer. Vol. I. The Belief Among the Aborigines of Australia, the Torres Straits Islands, New Guinea and Melanesia. The Gifford Lectures, St. Andrews, 1911-1912. London: Macmillan & Co., 1913. Pp. xxi, 495.

It may have occurred to some readers besides myself that for the task of scientific generalization Dr. Frazer has a dangerous power of writing beautifully on details. This, of course, makes his books more widely attractive; and, as a contribution to what he calls descriptive anthropology nothing could be more delightful than the present volume. Not indeed that the facts themselves are delightful; most of them are very far from it; the charm is in the skill with which they have been marshaled and the facility with which they are presented. Yet in the way of re-

sults little more emerges than new illustration of Tylor's and Spencer's theses. For a time, while we are dealing merely with "the seed of religion," that is to say, with the fear of ghosts, the evidence seems to tend to Spencer's Euhemerism, which would derive all gods from deified ancestors. When we come to the comparatively advanced religion of Fiji, however, we find that "the Fijians distinguished two classes of gods: first *kalou vu*, literally, 'Root-gods, that is, gods strictly so called, and second, *kalou yalo*, literally, 'Soul-gods,' that is, deified mortals" (p. 440). As no direct transition seems to have been observed from soul to (cosmic) god, the apparent evidence of Euhemerism, therefore, disappears, and we are thrown back on some more indirect derivation of religion from animism such as is suggested or left open by Sir E. B. Tylor.

How little bearing anthropological inquiry has on the rational question concerning the permanence or impermanence of the individual soul is shown by both introduction and conclusion. This is admitted by Dr. Frazer. After collecting all the mass of evidence set before us about the history of man's beliefs, he has to end for the present with no more than the half-statement of a bias. To those, he says, who take a lofty view of human nature, "it is easy and obvious to find in the similar beliefs of savages a welcome confirmation of their own cherished faith, and to insist that a conviction so widely spread and so firmly held must be based on some principle, call it instinct or intuition or what you will, which is deeper than logic and cannot be confuted by reasoning." There are others, however, "who take a different view of human nature, and who find in its contemplation a source of humility rather than of pride"; who, "when they turn their eyes from man himself to the place he occupies in the universe," are "overwhelmed by a sense of his littleness and insignificance." These "find little in the beliefs of savages to alter their opinion"; rather, "they say that if such drivellings do not refute the belief in immortality, as indeed from the nature of things they cannot do, they are at least fitted to invest its high-flown pretensions with an air of ludicrous absurdity."

By way of comment I shall not try to draw from the facts generalizations that Dr. Frazer has not drawn. The question I am more distinctively interested in is the rational question; and here I confess to the opposite bias. When we think of material vastness as implying the power of the human mind to conceive

it, this, it seems to me, is exalting and not humiliating; and historically it may well be argued that exaltation is the spontaneous feeling; for it was above all that of Bruno, the first of the moderns to seize imaginatively the notion of the stellar universe as generalized from the new astronomy of sun and planets. The view that presented itself to him as humiliating was that of scholasticism, for which the stars were of diviner substance than the earth. For the new astronomy, said Bruno, the earth, the habitation of man, is itself a star. The conception of human nature to which Dr. Frazer seems to incline is that of Augustine or Calvin without the theology; and to some it may be a matter of regret that anti-theologians should (as they so often do) make rhetorical appeals to this quasi-Christian humility against the philosophies that "think nobly of the soul."

In any case, illusions and errors have part in the natural process of man's beliefs. We may, if we choose, lament over this, but we are brought to no conclusion. For a result worth anything, I hold that we must turn not to 'instinct,' whether of savages or of civilized peoples, but to rational investigation. Regarding this, my analysis of what I know agrees entirely with Dr. Frazer's (p. 26): if I am to learn anything about my own immortality, it must be by inference: I do not know it directly. The proper method, however, I hold to be that of metaphysics, against which he is perhaps not free from prejudice. This I infer from a certain contrast of tone between the present volume and the brief apology for ritual superstition in *Psyche's Task*. Such institutions as taboo, Dr. Frazer there shows, though of no value in themselves, have aided in supporting, till reason was ready, the main institutions of society. As a pendant, no doubt, he could just as easily have written a panegyric on the scepticism by which they were destroyed; showing how, by breaking down taboos, it enables the types,—better, as we conceive,—that lived more by reason and less by custom to triumph over those that could find no substitute, to keep them socially coherent, for fear and authority. The sort of pendant I should propose now to add is not precisely this (for historians of rationalism have provided it in advance), but rather a panegyric on the mythologizing imagination which prepared the metaphysical question, What kind of being is the bearer of life and thought? It is in the neglect to say a word in its favor that I seem to discover the touch of anti-metaphysical bias.

I am pleased, however, to be able to quote a sentence in defence of the poor savage, showing that he was not at a level quite so low as that to which some recent philosophies are supposed (with whatever justice) to reduce the normal man: "If there ever has been any race of men who invariably acted first and thought afterwards, I can only say that, in the course of my reading and observation, I have never met with any trace of them, and I am apt to suppose that, if they ever existed anywhere but in the imagination of bookish dreamers, their career must have been an exceedingly short one, since in the struggle for existence they would surely succumb to adversaries who tempered and directed the blind fury of combat with at least a modicum of reason and sense" (p. 266).

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THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF MODERN LEGISLATION. By W. Jethro Brown, LL.D., Litt.D. London: John Murray, 1912. Pp. ix, 331.

Professor Jethro Brown's book opens with a Prologue on Anarchy. "Perhaps the supreme service of the doctrine of anarchy," he says, "is to be found in its challenge to traditional assumptions in politics. Any one who has faced that challenge fairly, and has sought to balance its strength and weakness, will approach the study of the principles of legislation with a new interest and a wider outlook" (p. 37).

Part I is occupied with a "Statement of Principles." Nineteenth century ideals of liberty have, according to Professor Brown, two aspects, from which are derived two fundamental principles, the worth of man and the unity of society (p. 98). The State, in other words, should regard each citizen both as an end in himself and as a means to the general well-being. And thus, "What differentiates modern politics from the politics of preceding centuries, is not the discovery of something entirely new, but the growing recognition of the significance, for the purposes of political science, of truths that have long been . . . attested by the seers and the prophets of the ages" (pp. 110-111).

In Part II are considered "Principles in Application"; the element of truth in individualist theory and the qualifications